One Michigan prison is getting more beds for high security inmates as another closes temporarily

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LANSING, MI – One Michigan prison is converting existing beds to accommodate high-security prisoners to enhance prison safety while another lower-security prison unit is temporarily closing.

The Michigan Department of Corrections announced Wednesday, March 25, it was adding more Level IV beds at the Macomb Correctional Facility as part of the department's ongoing mission to provide safe and secure prisons.

The department also announced it is temporarily closing a Level II unit at the Chippewa Correctional Facility, located in the state's upper peninsula.

The Macomb Correctional Facility will see a Level II unit, currently occupied by medium security prisoners, converted to accommodate prisoners with higher management needs by providing a more controlled environment.

Level II prisoners at the facility impacted by this change will be relocated to other housing units and facilities that meet their management needs.

MDOC has four general population security levels for prisoners: Level I, Level II, Level IV, and Level V, according to the Michigan Department of Corrections. Prisoner security classifications are based on the confinement and management needs of each prisoner, rather than their convictions.

During an individual's time in prison, their classification and housing location may change one or more times based on their conduct as well as health care and programming needs.

The state maintains three maximum security Level V facilities for men: the Ionia Correctional Facility in Ionia, west of Grand Rapids, and the Marquette Branch Prison and the Baraga Correctional Facility in the Upper Peninsula.

The Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, east of Ann Arbor, houses all security levels as it is the state's only prison for women.

The Level II unit at the Chippewa Correctional Facility is being temporarily shuttered due to reduced demand for these beds and staff vacancies at the facility.

MDOC stated jobs at the facility have been difficult to fill because of the availability of qualified candidates in the area, competing employment opportunities, housing availability and other factors.

A staffing crisis in Michigan's prisons has led to an explosion of overtime hours clocked by the state's correctional officers.

Corrections officers maintain order in the prison system, and with the shortage, morale has weakened within their ranks, and tensions between officers and prisoners lead to increasingly more dangerous

encounters.

The temporary closure of the Chippewa Correctional Facility unit is expected to reduce overtime and increase retention of current employees, while promoting a safer prison and employee wellbeing, MDOC said.

The changes come following the announcement of MDOC's "Safe Prisons Initiative" launched on March 20.

The initiative identifies five key areas that impact prison safety: prisoner classification and bed space; contraband introduction and technology; prisoner programming; training and staff support; and recruitment and retention.

In addition, the department will be implementing new tactics to improve employee recruitment and retention such as emerging leader development, hiring process enhancements, and improved marketing strategies.

The announcement of the program comes after reports of violence inside Michigan's prisons and the ongoing shortage of correctional officers.

The St. Louis Correctional Facility, located in mid-Michigan, experienced a surge in violence throughout July 2025, with numerous reports of assaults on prison staff and prisoners, according to a report from the Michigan Correction Organization, the union representing the state's correctional officers.

Prison officials were later called before the state house appropriations subcommittee on corrections and judiciary to testify about the surge.

Officials said the events, though troubling, were handled appropriately by staff and were isolated incidents.